

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** held on
Monday 4th May 2020 at 7.00pm

REMOTE MEETING (VIA ZOOM)

PRESENT:

Cllr. J. Beesley (Chairman)	Cllr. D. French (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. B. Cox	Cllr. D. Bennett
Cllr. J. Edwards	Cllr. S. Mayhew
Cllr. G. Johnson	Cllr. A. Smith
Cllr. K. Bedwell	

IN ATTENDANCE:

One member of the press (recorded meeting)
One member of the public
Councillor P. Sparks

Holly Goring - Town Clerk
Mark Francis - Estates & Facilities Manager
Rachel Newton – Senior Administrative Officer
Minutes taken by Rachel Newton

1.0. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda.

No declarations of interest were received.

2.0. STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION

One member of the audience wished to speak on items on the agenda.

EL.56.05.20 It was **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to enable statements from members of the public on matters relating to items on the agenda.

A campaigner and local resident, Amy Fieldhouse, wished to speak in relation to agenda item 7.2 – the Uckfield Community Fridge Initiative. The resident approached the Town Clerk, and Councillor B. Cox about similar schemes which had become established elsewhere in the country where community fridges were open to all and the food was free. She told the meeting that this is a scheme which is attractive to all walks of life, especially those on the breadline and for communities who wanted to see food waste minimised. Everyone could give and receive which in turn and research had proved increases trust, sharing of food, engagement, talking and educating one another, which would be integral to the community spirit in towns up and down the country.

Covid-19 had put us into unprecedented times, but there had been some fabulous groups come to fruition, including the outreach box which had helped vulnerable people with food being distributed at remarkable value to those who needed it most. This was fantastic work and exactly the sort of project that the community fridge could build upon. Community spirit had rocketed around us, there were trees where people had left things for others, just because the act of giving causes happiness and fulfillment. Strangers were collecting groceries and running errands for neighbours whom they've not met prior to lockdown, and bus shelter shops were sprouting up in our local communities. I have no idea what the future holds, but it could be hardship, unemployment and difficult times for many, now is the time to offer something sustainable and for nothing for the people of Uckfield. This should be accessible to all and not just for those who are destitute, as it is equally important to a family, individual or couple, for example, who are passionate about the environment, reducing the food mile and would like to see food waste minimised.

I appreciate times are tough, I am not asking for money, and I appreciate that sponsors prior to lockdown may not be able to contribute so much now, however, for your information I have a number of businesses willing to sponsor and donate to this project. To name a few, Waitrose and Tesco are fully on board, Truffles, Dominoes, Costa and Hartfields have all said yes. Where the fridge is located is key to successfully implementing the scheme, and how the fridge is portrayed. It should not be seen as a last resort to those who are destitute, but as an attractive offer for all. The biggest hurdle to overcome and where I need your help is location. I cannot see how getting this off the ground if I need to pay rent, but the fridge needs to be very central to the high street to be popular. I would like to propose placing the community fridge in a shed or a shipping container on Luxfords field in conjunction with the new Play Area. I have a proposal regarding how the cost of the building would be managed, which I will raise at a later date, on how the utilities are funded and maintained, but at present, my biggest stumbling block is location, so I am asking you to consider and in time, vote for the placing of a small building, suitable to house a small fridge on Luxford Field.

Two Councillors kindly expressed interest in visiting two local community fridges, but sadly due to lockdown, this has not been possible. I would also like to ask the committee to consider whether I could arrange a talk, virtually via zoom, if the neighbouring community fridges were willing, in order to inform your decision and not delay a decision on the Council's position in regard to Uckfield Community Fridge Campaign.

EL.57.05.20 It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate standing orders.

3.0. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
None

4.0. MINUTES

4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 17th February 2020

EL.58.05.20 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 17th February 2020 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4.2. Action list
Councillor J. Beesley mentioned EL52.02.20 To consider the design for the Luxford Play Area. This is underway, so there was no further action for these tasks.
Members agreed to remove this item and subsequently noted the action list.

4.3. Project Monitoring List – For information only
Councillor J. Beesley advised that the grass cutting contribution had been paid to East Sussex County Council.
Members agreed to remove this item and subsequently noted the action list.

5.0. FINANCE

5.1. To note bills paid
Members noted the bills paid.

5.2. To note the income and expenditure report
Members noted the report.

6.0. ADMINISTRATION

6.1. To note the draft minutes of the Strengthening Local Relationships (SLR) Meeting in January 2020
These were unavailable and would be presented to the next meeting.

7.0. ENVIRONMENT

7.1. To note the current position of the Town Council's Estates
Members noted the report.

7.2. To consider an update on the Uckfield Community Fridge initiative
The Chairman referred to resident Amy Fieldhouse's contribution earlier in the meeting.

One member remarked that being part of the Food Outreach Box scheme, and being one of the Councillors who had been keen to go and visit other community fridges, wasn't initially sure how it would work with safety etc. This detailed report had helped to explain the preparations and consideration that would be given to health and safety and food safety. The Food Outreach Box scheme had highlighted that there needed to be a plan in place. The Food Outbox Box scheme was reducing to once a week. .

There was interest from members in undertaking a virtual zoom tour of those community fridges which were up and running.

Another member who had also been involved with Amy's campaign and helped with the Outreach Boxes, had become more determined to get the community fridge underway. It was clear that the pockets of poverty that they were fearful of did exist.

A third councillor announced that they currently spent most of her working week supporting people who were experiencing domestic abuse. Without breaching anyone's confidentiality, they spoke of situations where controlling abusers, meant that family members may even have to steal food to provide for the family.

A fourth member raised their concern about putting anything on Luxford Field itself but suggested that there was the land behind The Source or The Hub. It

was suggested that if a proposal were made that if there was going to be a shipping crate, potentially in the region of The Hub/The Source, or nearby, these would be potential sites to get this started as soon as possible.

EL.59.05.20 Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) note the report;
- (ii) request the Estates & Facilities Manager to investigate potential sites for a community fridge, and;
- (iii) due to the current situation, arrange virtual visits of Community Fridges elsewhere.

7.3 To consider a suggestion by Councillor D. French

Councillor D. French had suggested whether the developer associated with the Mallards Drive development could be asked to donate wood from at least one of the oak trees and for the developer to cover the costs of producing something from the wood which would be useful to the community.

One member thought it was a lovely idea and felt particularly sad about the oak tree, so if it had to be cut down it would be good to create something out of them.

A second member agreed, and asked if they could spare more than one tree.

The Estates and Facilities Manager, Mark Francis, suggested that when the developers were approached, that we asked for maybe a donation for the Tree for A Tree Scheme, to help with planting trees in the town as well. Councillor D. French suggested as a proposal to approach the Developer and request that they did something with the oak trees that would benefit the community, and in the meantime, for the Town Council to come up with its own ideas, and also maybe put it out to the public. This was seconded by The Town Mayor, Spike Mayhew.

EL.60.05.20 Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) note the report;
- (ii) approach the developer of the Mallards Drive development for the wood to be reused from the felled oak trees to benefit the community and consult the public on possible re-uses.

7.4 To note an update on the 2020 Allotment Competition

Members were very grateful to Stavertons Nursery for their incredibly generous offer to increase prizes, and to get involved, especially since they would also be experiencing difficulties themselves in the current time.

Members noted the report.

8.0 LEISURE

8.1 To consider an update on the Luxfords Play Area Upgrade

The Estates and Facilities Manager advised that by moving away from just the one piece of equipment – wheelchair swing, work had now progressed to introduce additional features which would open up more of the play area to those with disabilities. One member enquired about the remaining budget for any other play areas needing repairs; the Estates & Facilities Manager advised that there were additional play area budget codes for repairs to be paid from..

EL.61.05.20 Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) note the report, and;
- (ii) spend the additional funds of £31,522.45 on the additional items suggested in this report, leaving only £1,774.82 play area in the budget.

The Town Clerk said thank you to the Estates & Facilities Manager for all his hard work in planning this project, the scheme looked fantastic and exactly what was needed in the centre of town. Also, the Town Clerk highlighted that people were still flouting rules in play areas, and requested that people remembered that this was the responsibility of all of us, to listen and act according to government announcements, as social distancing was there to protect all of us.

9.0 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

9.1 Climate Change Working Group

Although not a member of the Environment & Leisure Committee, Councillor P. Sparks wanted to add something at the Chairman's discretion; during the current situation they had to put everything on hold, but as soon as back in operation, they would get moving as it was a vitally important issue to improve the environment.

Members noted the report.

9.2 2020 VE Anniversary Working Group (activities placed on hold until autumn 2020)

10.0 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

10.1 Active Uckfield

Nothing to report at this time.

10.2 Age Concern

Councillor J. Beesley thanked Councillor C. Macve for this report.

Members noted report.

10.3 West Park LNR and Hempstead Meadows LNR – Supporters Group

Nothing to report at this time.

10.4 Luxford Centre Management Committee

Nothing to report at this time.

10.5 Uckfield and District Twinning Association

Nothing to report at this time.

10.6 Uckfield Parkrun Board

Nothing to report at this time.

10.7 Uckfield Plastic Free Working Group

Nothing to report at this time.

10.8 Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee

Councillor J. Beesley, again, also thanked Councillor C. Macve for this report.

Members noted the report.

10.9 Uckfield Youth Club Board

Nothing to report at this time.

10.10 Wealden Bus Alliance/Weald Link

Nothing to report at this time.

10.11 All Weather Pitch Operational Group

Nothing to report at this time.

11.0 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor J. Beesley wished to thank everyone in the office, Mark and his team on what they were trying to do around the town, for putting up notices and dealing with enquiries, and trying to keep everybody safe. He also re-iterated concerns with regards to those flouting rules, but expressed that we could only all do our best.

The Chairman also reminded members to not forget Friday afternoon to plan VE Day in the front garden, getting flags out, tea pots and celebrate safely.

12.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

EL62.05.20

It was **RESOLVED** that pursuant to Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it was advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw.

- 12.1 To consider a report on the Marketing programme.
Members discussed and subsequently noted the report.

The meeting finished at 19.46pm